MADRAS:

ITS ARMY AND COMMERCE

VIEWED IN CONNECTION WITH

BENGAL POLICY.

BY A TAX-PAYER.

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MADRAS: ITS ARMY AND COMMERCE,

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NATURE having provided no harbour along the east coast of India to guide the pioneers of commerce in the selection of a centre for imports and exports, they chose the locality now known as the Town of Madras for this purpose, on account of its centrical position, and its facilities for free communication with the interior. The main disadvantages against which this locality has had to contend, have been its exposure to a dangerous surf, and its liability, during periods of war, to sudden and effective attack. But the choice of the site was on the whole judicious, and the town has risen to a high commercial rank in the face of these disadvantages, and in spite of its neither possessing, like Bombay, a noble natural harbour, nor, like Calcutta, lying on the bank of a great and navigable river, which cheaply carries to its storehouses the surplus produce of a vast, fertile and populous interior. No mean testimony has been paid to the wisdom of the selection by its being recently chosen as the point of junction for all telegraphic intercourse between China and Australia on the one hand, and India, Europe and America on the other.

Until the complete and practical application of steam motive power to land carriages and to ships,

it was a physical impossibility to remedy the heavy drawback caused to the prosperity of the place by the broad lines of breakers between the beach of Madras and its Roadstead. It has, however, now been proved that the construction of a great break-water, carrying on its extremities two powerful protecting batteries, would be not only a practicable but an easy engineering work. Apart from all local interests, policy, economy, and humanity alike point to the propriety of there being at least one harbour of refuge for the shipping, which, in constantly increasing numbers, frequent the western portion of the Bay of Bengal. At present any vessel dismasted by a cyclone, or in any other way seriously damaged, has to make the best of its way for repair to the distant and costly port of Calcutta, and there is no place of safety to which even a steamer can run, when the certain premonitory signs tell that a hurricane is approaching. Nature itself has placed at our disposal material for conquering our difficulties. Within a few miles of the shore there are the rocky hills of St. Thomas' Mount and Palaveram, from which any amount of the hardest stone can be blasted. The country between those hills and the shore to the south of the mouth of the Adyar is a level, over which tramways could easily be made. A jetty could without difficulty be erected for the embarkation, in all ordinary weather, of the stones in lighters, which might be towed to the line where the stones are to be dropped into the sea for the

formation of a breakwater. We have, moreover, a superabundance of convicts for boring, blasting and transport of material, besides the command of a numerous and cheap class of free labourers. We may therefore confidently hope that the local and national discredit, which arises from the present condition of our exposed roadstead, will not last much longer.

The second main disadvantage to which Madras always has been, and must continue to be exposed, in the absence of due precautionary measures, is, as we have said, its liability to sudden and effective attack. On the general question of such precautionary measures, it is admitted that all military organization is constituted, either for the purpose of enabling one set of men to kill and rob another set of men, or for that of enabling a peace-loving community successfully to defend their lives, their families, and their property against the assaults of disciplined and well-armed assailants. In the latter case it is simply an unavoidable and wise means of insuring peace without which freedom and trade cannot exist. It is in this light alone that military organization in Southern India can be viewed, for the 35,000,000 of persons who make up its population, are, viewing them as a great whole, composed of agricultural, trading, and therefore peace-loving races. We would, however, at once sink to the level of those men, who are now trying to usurp the sole administration of all India in its most minute

detail, were we to shut our eyes to the lessons of local history.

Absorbed in money-making, Madras found itself in a state of very feeble defence, when it was assaulted by the French in 1746. It had, we are informed by ORME, attained a degree of opulence and reputation which rendered it inferior to none of the European establishments in India excepting Goa. The English numbered 300 men, of whom 200 were soldiers of the garrison,(none of whom, excepting two or three of the officers, had seen any other service than that of the parade), and the rest were engaged in the occupations of commerce. The French succeeded in landing 1,100 Europeans, 400 Caffres and 400 disciplined Indians, within cannon-shot of the town, which they at once commenced to bombard simultaneously from the land on the west, and the sea on the east. This was followed by a bombardment from the south, and finally the garrison capitulated on DE LA BOURDINNAIS' own terms. The Artillery and warlike stores were at first stipulated to be equally divided between the victors and vanquished ; all the merchandize, together with all the Naval stores found in the town, were laden on board the French ship ; a requisition of 1,100,000 pagodas, or £440,000 was complied with ; and hostages given for the performance of the treaty. But the treaty of ransom was declared null by DUPLEIX, and the English were forced to deliver up the keys of all magazines without exception, to surrender all merchandizes, plate, provisions, warlike

stores, and horses, and ordered to quit the town within four days. ORME protests against the avaricious exactitude with which the effects of the English were confiscated, and states that the fortunes of most of the English inhabitants were ruined. As for the Governor and several of the principal officials of the Fort, they were carried prisoners to Pondicherry, and there led in triumph through that town.

The events of European politics having restored Madras to our countrymen, they wisely summoned from England its leading Mathematician and Engineer, Mr. ROBINS, who scientifically applied the continuous labour of many thousands of workers in throwing up the ramparts of Fort St. George. Consequently a vigorous and successful defence was practicable, when the French under Lally made in 1759 another assault.

Ten years later, a Mysore chief, with only a few thousand cavalry at his back, marched through the Carnatic, ravaging the country and burning our villages, to the very walls of Madras. He there dictated a treaty, disgraceful to us—but the walls of the Fort again saved the merchants and tradesmen from plunder and ruin.

From that period till the extinction of the East India Company in 1858, what was termed the "Coast Army" was kept up, complete in Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery, and adequately supplied with war material from local factories. It was, therefore, able not only to keep back inland enemies from our own doors,—which is the most expensive locality they can possibly

occupy,—but to strike them down when still far off. No ungrateful calumnies were then heard regarding the inefficiency in marching and in fighting power of any one branch of the military service. All branches were fairly and often tried, and were not found wanting. Examples of marked gallantry, of patient endurance, and of touching devotion were frequent.

During the long period above referred to Madras was free from any serious assault from the sea. Its ramparts carried on them the best procurable guns, which secured them from any sudden attack from solitary ships or squadrons, while the supremacy of the British Navy prevented the assemblage of any powerful fleet in the Indian seas. Peace and local prosperity were thus bought by large outlays of money,—as they must be practically bought till the end of the human chapter,—but the money balance was enormously on the side of the buyers.

It was, however, this very naval supremacy which lulled our countrymen at home and in the colonies into a pleasant but dangerous sleep of security, from which they are only just beginning to rouse themselves. In the early part of this century a patriotic poet could with some truth sing

> 'Britannia needs no bulwark,
> No towers along her steep:'

but the prosaic Home-budgets, which in the course of the last few years have devoted, and are devoting many millions to the coast fortifications of England, show how inappropriate the lines are to the present

day. The first rush of an Iron-clad in the last American war sent to the bottom a noble frigate of the standard type full of brave men, and thereby settled the question of the efficiency of our "Wooden walls." Since then every civilized nation has been lavishly spending treasure in building Iron-clads of every size. The smallest of these could with impunity deal destruction among a whole fleet such as that which Nelson commanded at Trafalgar, and the largest are locomotive fortresses of the strongest description, filled with trained fighting men, and armed with guns of hitherto unheard-of power. Together with a reliance on our naval supremacy, and on the ubiquity of our men-of-war, faith in treaties of peace has become a thing of the past. It is folly to suppose that our foreign friends of to-day may not be to-morrow our bitter and death-dealing enemies. It is folly also to imagine that they have not marked on their war maps all our weak points, and all our rich trade and strategic centres, and that against these will not be directed, on the sudden outburst of war, some at least of those movable forts which already float in the waters of Asia.

The prospective danger was clearly seen by the late Court of Directors,—a body of men who devoted themselves to the best interests of India, and who, composed of merchants, soldiers and civilians, all men of practical experience in Eastern affairs, constituted the wisest and most gentlemanly Government which our Indian Empire could possibly have. These

men expended large sums in fortifying Aden, and ordered a free outlay in securing the safety of Bombay, Madras, Singapore and Rangoon. Less was done for Calcutta, as while its natural position, far up a dangerous river, rendered it virtually invulnerable against naval attack, the same circumstance also made it liable to isolation, and incapable of giving aid to any other threatened or attacked locality. It was thought that the removal in times of war of the buoys, which guide the intricate navigation of the Hooghly, and the planting of a few batteries on the most suitable reaches, would be sufficient to give a sense of safety to its inhabitants, who, enervated by the fevers bred in their swamps, are prone to alarm, and to most of the weaker passions which afflict the human race.

Till very recently no one denied that Madras was a centre of commerce, and at the same time an important strategic point, which it was not only necessary to guard, but which should contain all the elements requisite for the conduct of modern war. Such was the opinion of Clive, Hastings, Wellesley, Wellington, Malcolm, Munro, and of many other statesmen and warriors; but such, unfortunately, is not the opinion of an active and unscrupulous clique of soldiers, gallant men but as yet of no high mark; of civilians, energetic but of doubtful sagacity, and of "financiers," whose assumption of the title is a laughing-stock. These by their measures have spread broad-cast throughout the land the seeds of discontent with misdirected persistency, and are now urging fantastic schemes,

which, if carried out, will give to rebellion and to external attack their best chances of success. The leader of these men in a grave official document tells Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India that any allusion to the great mutiny of 1857-8 in Bengal—where the blood of Christians was poured out like water—is nothing more than an ungenerous "taunt." He wishes the history of that catastrophe—dire but instructive—to be blotted out, or only such portions of it to be remembered as can be twisted by him and his followers into weapons of insult to men of the Madras Presidency.

And what, it will naturally be asked, has been the cause of this insensate jealousy? The simple and only answer is, that the contrast between the conduct of Madras and Bengal, and the deep humiliation felt by the latter in being aided and rescued by men whom they causelessly hated, formed a burden too heavy to be borne by a class of narrow-minded men. Some of them would, if their fellow-sufferers had permitted it, have imitated the conduct of a most amiable friend of the writer's, who, when actually drowning, flung from him a rope which was thrown to him by a man whom he personally disliked and despised. The friend was drowned, but Bengal and India were saved.

When the crisis of 1857 occurred, Madras was governed by a nobleman of pacific proclivities, unversed in warlike matters; yet, as soon as the piteous cries for aid were heard, Infantry, Artilery,

tents and other munitions of war of great value were promptly despatched to Calcutta. Cavalry would also have gone, but there was only one weak European Regiment of this useful branch of the service between Kamptee and Cape Comorin, and with regard to the Native Regiment, which was only half-invited rather than ordered to embark, everything that timid weakness, openly evinced suspicion, and almost childish mismanagement could do, was laboriously and effectively done to render the half-invitation distrusted and unwelcome. The Regiment did not mutiny, but it was deliberately demoralised, and then broken up or scattered among other Regiments to tell the tale and to block the current of promotion. Were it not in print before us, it would be incredible that General NORMAN, the representative of the three Indian Armies in the Council of India, should in a State Document* mark out this sad incident, while he laboriously depreciates the services of the Madras Infantry, and is prudently silent regarding the Artillery who were sent to Bengal. By this partial forgetfulness, the gallant Officer for once belies the single attribute for which he has established a local reputation,—that of being the possessor " of a capital memory, which embraces every name and every date of promotion in the Army list."

What did the Madras Troops in Bengal do to merit such treatment ? Of NEILL and his Fusiliers

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* See page 349 of Blue Book, on East India Mutiny Expenditure.

not a word need be here said, for even Bengal prejudice is now allowing these brave men to sleep undisturbed in their soldiers' graves. And we have space only to glance at the services of the Madras Native Infantry and Artillery. In one of the Batteries the Gunners were Europeans. The bones of more than a fourth of them were soon laid in the inhospitable soil of another Presidency. The Drivers were natives of exactly the same races as the Madras Cavalry. Their excellent riding and driving and gallant bearing were conspicuous. Lucknow and other fields bore too strong a testimony to their soldier-like conduct for successful denial. Another portion of the Artillery was a division from a native troop. They too did service, acknowledged to be good by Lord CLYDE himself at his relief of Lucknow and his subsequent December actions near Cawnpore. They were then, being Madrassees, sent to the rear to guard communications, and were not again employed in serious action, but they performed much useful and necessary work.

The third portion was also a native Battery, whose Gunners were of the same classes as those composing the Native Infantry of Madras. Two-thirds of the Battery, after the men had been well nigh decimated by cholera, reached Cawnpore in October or November 1857. They were engaged in General WINDHAM'S disastrous actions against the Gwalior rebels, the only reliable account of which, as far as the writer's knowledge extends, is in an admirable

pamphlet, entitled "*What is History and what is Fact*," by the late respected Colonel C. H. Drury.* It appears that 2nd Lieutenant Chamier, a gallant young Officer, but unknown to the men, had been placed in command, and the following is his recorded testimony—"The conduct of the men in the actions which took place, and on occasions which were especially trying, was all that could be desired. I had nothing to do with the previous training of the Battery—so I am not guilty of awarding praise to myself, when I say that the discipline of the men, their efficient handling of their guns, and the coolness of the performance of their work in action could not be surpassed. Major General Dupuis, R. A., sent for me on the field at the close of one of the actions, and thanked me for the excellent work the Battery had done, and subsequently wrote to me testifying to the 'gallant manner in which the guns had been worked;' and the Brigadier Commanding published an order in which he remarked that he had 'had personal opportunity of observing them during the first three days' engagements, and it is gratifying to him to be able to say that no Artillery in the world could have behaved better under the severe fire of the enemy.' The Battery suffered heavily—especially two guns which were with me, participating in the defence of the bridge near the Assembly rooms. I have not a list of the casualties by me, but I observe in a book, entitled 'the *Defence of Cawnpore*, by Lieutenant-

* Published by Messrs. Higginbotham and Co., Madras.

Colonel ApYE, C. B., R. A.,' a remark that 'there were also fifteen casualties among the Madras Gunners of the Battery out of eighteen.' The physique of the men was excellent. They were well set up and soldier-like in appearance, full of energy, and eager to be engaged with the enemy. Their powers of endurance too were well tested, and I never found them fail."

Additional evidence to the same effect from eye-witnesses still living is available. This Battery too was promptly sent to the rear, and all but deprived of its guns, After two years' knocking about these devoted men were returned to their Presidency—not to be honoured and rewarded—but to be treated as disloyal and untrustworthy men, on whom reliance, to use General NORMAN's expression, was "preposterous." Their promotion was at once stopped, and they were speedily reduced, pensioned and discharged. Can it be a wise policy, or one even of sound finance, which sends to their villages in semi-starvation and despair, unable to provide for their sons, or to give away their daughters respectably in marriage, men who loyally fought and bled for those who have ruined them? The cases of many of the Mussulmans among them are peculiarly grievous. With the earnestness of want they now seek almost any kind of menial employment. They say, "let us live first and afterwards educate us." Their mosques are their only comfort, and only the other day a group of them besought one of their few remaining Christian friends for help to provide oil for lighting their place of prayer

at St. Thomas' Mount, as they could themselves no longer afford the expense. May their lamps continue burning till happier times come to them!

Two out of four Madras British Officers were wounded and their chargers shot in the November actions at Cawnpore, but all notice of these casualties, and of those in the Native Battery were omitted at the time from the recording Despatches. And when Lord CLYDE came to the rescue with an over-whelming force, the brave and respected Brigadier CARTHEW,—a Madras Officer who had nobly done his duty,—was made the scapegoat* for the utter want of knowledge, watchfulness, dash, and skill of General WINDHAM. He too was of course sent to the rear, and, having proved himself a true soldier, was not again very actively employed.

As to the Madras Native Infantry in Bengal, a few words only can be spared. Two well officered and efficient Regiments, the 17th and 27th N. I., with some Companies of rifles, were landed, pushed to the front, and then denied opportunities of distinction in any one of the principal actions. After much patiently endured marching, hard work, and exposure in holding exposed and important posts, and in escort duties, they were marched to Calcutta, guarding large batches of the common convicts of Bengal. Even the great moral effect of their pre-

* General MANSFIELD (Lord SANDHURST) makes use of the term 'victim' instead of 'scape goat' with regard to General CARTHEW in this matter.

sence, at first acknowledged, is now forgotten, and General NORMAN triumphantly records that after careful search a loss among them of less than 10 killed and 30 wounded in actual battle can only be traced. There is no reason however to suppose, that, if the chance had been given to them, the Madras Infantry would not have behaved in action just as well as their brothers and cousins in the Artillery. It is proverbial that when comrades meet in after years, they are prone almost lovingly to recall the incidents of their campaigns. When therefore such meetings among Madras men who served in Bengal are marked by silence, if not by indignant memories, some deep feeling of unmerited treatment must be at the root of the matter. But let us leave the sickening topic.

We have said that the Court of Directors, before their abolition, where bestowing careful attention on the Military position of Madras, and the safety of its commerce. Their enlightened views were earnestly adopted by their successors, Sir CHARLES WOOD and his Council, who repeatedly pressed on the Governments of Madras and of India the advisability and necessity of erecting at once a new Arsenal with Magazines, and new Gun-Carriage and Powder Factories round the base of the hills at St. Thomas' Mount. Powerful Batteries were ordered to be constructed on the rising ground, and Fort St. George was also to be kept in a state of thorough defence. No one then dreamt of abolishing Institutions, which, during war, provide the life-blood of an army. Sr ARTHUR

Cotton and other skilful Engineers were consulted. The plans were drawn, and the sites selected, but a succession of men and of events unfortunately prevented the wise project being carried out.

The Bengal mutiny debts had to be paid, and a series of costly manias possessed our rulers. We had first the Police mania. Men were enlisted, who were thought to be capable of doing the double duty of repressing and detecting civil crime in periods of peace, and of being fit substitutes for a regular army on the breaking out of war. The fallacy of the idea has become gradually apparent to all, and our Police—useful and deserving men in their own way—are now required to perform only their appropriate duties. It may be added that the rumour is strong that they too have recently been treated in a financial manner well calculated to shake their trust in the good faith of their British masters. In fact this trust, which was the gradual growth of the previous century, has been rapidly dying out since the extinction of "Company Bahadoor," and since the rise of Departmental instead of personal Government.

Then we had the Education mania, which has cost, and is costing vast sums. It was fondly hoped by visionary men, that the youth of the country could suddenly be educated into self-reliance and common sense. It was believed by some that an angelic host of B. A.'s and M. A.'s would arise who would leaven the whole country with the love of their instructors,

and by others that the mental education of the masses would soon render our longer reign in India quite unnecessary. The option of abolishing us was of course intended to lie with our pupils. Huge tomes, with extended appendices, crammed with educational statistics, have annually to be paid for by the patient tax-payer, who however never dreams of reading them, because he has before his eyes the bad results of his expenditure. No one has the slightest confidence in the semi-educated students, and they are most disliked and distrusted by their own countrymen who know them best. It may be added as a curious fact, that while this mania is still existing, one of the oldest and most useful schools in the Presidency is, by the fiat of a ruler ignorant of its very existence, about to be abolished. The school alluded to is that attached to the Madras Gun-Carriage Factory, where for more than half a century, many orphan sons of our Christian soldiers have been well-trained in practical science and in applying their training to mechanical arts, which gave them almost the only means in this country of obtaining an honest livelihood, and of becoming as they have become worthy subjects and defenders of the State.

Simultaneously we had the criminal reforming mania, in which vast sums have been sunk. Immense buildings, 'replete with comforts,' have been erected for the accommodation of thousands of unmitigated rascals, who are very indifferently instructed in the gentle arts of photography, printing, boot-mak-

ing, &c., instead of being employed in road, tank and harbour-making. If employed in the latter way, their lives would be, as they ought to be, a burden to them while under sentence; but they would be usefully spent in the service of the community whom they had plundered, and professional thieves might thus possibly conclude that honesty for the future was their best policy. As it is, however, a pride is taken among rival Jail Superintendents in making by tender usage, good-feeding and medical care, the death-rate of the criminal much less than that of the non-criminal population; and the culprits show an appreciation of our policy by taking care to be found out in committing fresh crimes, as soon as they are forced by the expiration of their sentences to leave the luxurious mode of life which pseudo-philanthropists have wastefully provided for them at our expense.

We were also afflicted with an architectural and æsthetic mania. A palace with lofty towers was erected on the Neilgherry Hills for the poor children of our old Military Orphan Asylums. Another palace was built at Madras as a College, to which the students very naturally resort in fewer numbers than they were wont to do to its humbler but more conveniently situated predecessor. Lacs of Rupees are being laid out in providing with the aid of painted and stucco arches a Saracenic shell for our peaceful Revenue Board, and lacs more are being spent on a local Senate-house, though nobody knows who our senators are. Treasures too, are being lavished on a magnificent new

lway Station, though we already have a fine one, l though the most sanguine of our Railway Finan- rs has no expectation of even a portion of the inte- t of the expended capital being covered by increas- traffic.

These manias have engulfed, and are engulfing ge sums, which, had they been expended in the istruction of a breakwater and in precautionary asures of defence, would have gone far to secure general safety and the extended prosperity of idras. But there were other causes which rendered public averse to brooking the thought of any litional Military expenditure.

The Native Army of Bengal "had exploded with astrous effect," while that of Madras had "done ellent service."* Yet the system of the latter abolished because that of the former alone had ed. A mis-named Staff Corps for re-officering the my on a new and very irregular footing was rashly de universal throughout India. The destruction he old *esprit de corps* in Regiments has been the ılt. Re-organization was in fact disorganization, increased expense has been incurred in maintain- reduced numbers of less efficiently officered fighting n. Taxation too had to be kept up to meet other v demands—among them the guaranteed interest the capital expended on Indian Railways. It had n vainly hoped that these Railways themselves uld pay, and as this hope vanished, the idea was

* Secretary of State's Despatch, dated 27th January 1870.

encouraged by those who ought to have known better, that what they termed the newly created "power of pouring large bodies of troops into any threatened or disturbed portion of the country" would render feasible extensive army reductions. Thus indirectly the interest was to be covered. But the truth of the warnings of Lord STRATHNAIRN, one of the best and wisest Commanders to whom India has given a field, has been proved in the last European wars. While fully admitting that Railways were useful allies, he pointed out in forcible language* that we would be foolish in placing too much reliance on an ally, the efficiency of which a few barrels, of powder judiciously exploded, could in a moment destroy; and to the astonishment of many, it has also been proved that masses of men, with the requisite materials for real war, can be moved more rapidly by foot than by rail.

While it was admitted on all sides that local taxation had reached, if it had not passed, the limit of human endurance, the remonstrances of the Home Government on account of the dangerous Military condition of Madras were silenced—partially from another cause. Guns were being made by every foreign nation, throwing enormous projectiles with powers of penetration to which the ramparts of our forts and the walls of our old magazines could offer little more than pie-crust resistance. A modern 600 Pr. shell pierces 50 or 60 feet of earth-work. Steam, as we have mentioned, has given locomotion to iron

* Secretary of State's Despatch, dated 27th January 1870.

fortresses carrying these guns. The cannon producing power of our Royal Factory at Woolwich cannot as yet furnish weapons adequate even at Home to meet this new danger. Distant positions must therefore wait. Had the old Company still existed, recourse would have been had to the open market. The great private factories at Home—such as those of Armstrong and Whitworth—would have been subsidised, and our centres of commerce would have been speedily made safe.

Meanwhile has anything occurred to make Madras less liable to attack? On the contrary, while its imperial importance has increased, the opening of the Suez Canal has given a more rapid means of approach to those who may be our enemies. No one believes in the continued neutrality of Egypt. Treaties are now blown away by the first puff of war, and when that event occurs, a rush will be made to grasp the country through which the modern highway to India passes. Our enemies will probably be readier for action and nearer to the Canal than ourselves. It is unpleasant to contemplate the possible results, but it would be wrong to ignore them. The Bismarcks and Gortschakoffs of foreign nations are not blind to them, though we may obstinately shut our own eyes. What for instance would have been our position had the Alabama difficulties of last year ended in war, and had the American iron-clads, which practised in the Corean rivers, opened fire upon our town instead? The place must either have been de-

stroyed or ransomed. Our "financiers" could probably tell us within a few rupees the cost of such a proceeding, as they have some data to go on. Half a million of pounds sterling, besides cannon and munitions of war, were scouted by DUPLEIX one hundred and twenty-six years ago, as an absurdly small ransom for Madras. After a local arrangement had been made with our supposed American visitors, they would probably have invited on board their ships a member of Council and a couple of leading merchants, to guide them in not being too extortionate in their demands at other Indian ports of call.

The Press, however, has called attention to what might be a much graver contingency. England demonstrated by the Crimean War to our Russian friends, how a great nation might be exhausted by being attacked in one extremity while the other was seriously threatened. Should our iron-clad assailants find the place without adequate means of resistance, and be accompanied by moderate *corps d'armée,* our prospects would be rather gloomy. The recent failure in our attempt to assemble a respectable force for a camp of exercise, notwithstanding our boasted net-work of railways, is fresh in our memories. Do even our "financiers" anticipate that such an assemblage will be easier after the electric wires have spread through the land the news that a hostile force has been landed, and that a place of historical and strategical importance has fallen into its power? We do not deny the noble physique and proved bravery of Seiks, Punjabees, and

other warlike nations of the North-west; but supposing, only for the sake of argument, that the 2,000 miles of intervening rail remained intact, can we securely count on these warriors siding wholly with us at a time when active though unseen emissaries will be stirring their patriotic instincts to strike out for the recovery of their own country? If they merge into a state of mere unrest, it will be impossible to drain that part of India of the Regiments of our countrymen, who are even now required to keep it in subjection; a succession of Commanders-in-chief of no ordinary stamp—CLYDE, STRATHNAIRN, MANSFIELD and NAPIER of Magdala—have protested against even the reductions that have already been made in our British garrisons. The crushing out of the Kooka rising a few months ago may be taken as a sign of the times. It took place almost within reach of an overwhelming force at the Delhi camp of exercise, and yet we have practically accepted it as a politic though sanguinary necessity. Contrast this with the feelings produced by the so-called "Mutiny" of our 19th Regiment of Native Infantry, of which so much capital was made by the Bengal press. The latter event took place at our very doors, but it did not cause the loss of one minute's sleep to man, woman or child We all knew that in it there was no real disaffection —no practical disloyalty, and we rightly concluded that there had been much official and financial mismanagement and blundering.

We have still a breathing time left us, in which

to set our house in order and to place ourselves in the best position to meet possible eventualities. What is needed above all is rest from further legislative and other revolutions. That need was recently pointed out to our Council in the strongest terms by Mr. NORTON, our late Queen's Advocate, who knew India well. The Secretary of State for India, the Duke of Argyll, reiterates the same opinion. The following sentences from one of his Despatches prove this. His Grace says —"since the calamitous events of 1857-58, many great changes have taken place in the amount and composition of the Native Armies, which, however inevitable in themselves, have, it cannot be doubted, in most cases tended to disturb and perplex not only the Native soldiers themselves, but all that part of the population directly or indirectly connected with them." With regard to the Madras Army he remarks that it "has been already largely reduced," and that it has "been subjected to a very important change as regards the relative position of its European Officers. Time," he adds, "has not yet sufficed to allay the disturbing effects of these various changes and reductions. The service seems to me to need that encouragement for the future which can only be found in a relief from a depressing apprehension of continued instability and endless change." These indeed are words of wisdom, but the politicians and financiers who wield the Government of India treat them with practical scorn. What a sad example this holds forth to their own subordinates!

Still further changes are emphatically and with persistence demanded in the teeth of the opinions we have quoted and of those of other thinking men. No language can be clearer than that of Colonel CHESNEY, himself a Bengal officer, in his work on "*Indian Polity,*" where he points out the danger even now existing from the Bengal Army. He says—"the isolation formerly maintained of the Seik—or, to speak more correctly, the Punjabee—from the other peoples of India has been broken through, and one of the most important principles which I venture to think should guide our Military policy has been abandoned. The moral above all others, to be learnt from the mutiny, surely was, that the different military bodies which we were compelled to keep up should be as distinct as possible from each other. It was this isolation which saved the Bombay and Madras Armies from being contaminated with the spirit of mutiny. The same cause, among others, kept the Punjab on our side: the bulk of the Bengal Army was not recruited from that country. But this advantage has now been discounted. The Punjabee levies have now been converted into the Regiments of the Bengal line, and take their regular tour of duty throughout the whole country, from the Peshawar country to Assam. Seik sentries now garrison Fort William, side by side with Poorbeahs from Oude and Behar; and, as a consequence, the Seik soldier, in the opinion of many who are intimately acquainted with that people, are fast losing their special characteristics as a separate race and are

becoming, so to speak, citizens of the world. The result may be, that if, on the recurrence of such an emergency, we have occasion again to invoke their help, we shall find their sympathies transferred from our side to that of their brother soldiers. If the Bengal Army has to be put down a second time, it will be an army representing every race of people, from the Ganges to the Indus, and there will be no second Seik Army to look to. Not only will the lesson to be learnt from 1857 have been all thrown away; we shall have artificially created a second difficulty, of precisely the same kind, without reserving any means of overcoming it."

But this danger of an even greater explosion than that of 1857 is not now confined to the extended country marked out by Colonel CHESNEY, Lord SANDHURST,—no friend of, though a stranger to, the Madras Army—writing in 1870, says—"it is invidious to call attention to the efficiency of rival bodies, but no *amour propre* can be hurt by the assertion that the races of Southern India are much inferior to the races of the North-west in physique and in military spirit. These facts are so well appreciated in Bombay, that the commanding officers of the Army of that Presidency do all they can to fill up their Regiments with men from the Punjab, the Cis Sutledge States and Oudh" Lord NAPIER of Magdala, late Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, goes still further, when in support of the views of the Duke of Argyll he writes—"the isolation of the Madras Army renders it a coun-

terpoise to the Bengal *and* Bombay Armies, *which have considerable elements in common.*" We moreover know that the Regiments of the Hyderabad Contingent and its well-drilled Batteries are principally composed of Oudh men, who cannot have forgotten the recent slaying by us of many of their relations and friends, and our adoption of their country. They were barely kept from mutiny by the cordon of faithful Madras Sepoys who, in 1857, garrisoned the country lying between the Nizam's dominions and Bengal. Now with regard to all these masses of dangerous men—leavened as they now are with a common sympathy of brotherhood—it is a fact that the bonds of discipline were never, particularly in Bengal itself, nearly so tightly held as in the Madras Army. The contrast in this respect was one of the unavoidable humiliations, which the Bengal Officer felt, when he saw in 1857 Madras soldiers in his Presidency. It has been no where asserted that discipline is now less lax than it was before the mutiny. The contrary is, in some cases, candidly admitted, and it is acknowledged that instances are not rare where the men practically command their European Officers.

With all this staring one in the face, the persistent propositions of a military and financial clique still further to reduce and unsettle the only "counterpoise to the Bombay and Bengal Armies" and to substitute in its place both in Central India and in Burmah men of the Punjab and Oudh, seem to be

not only against common sense, but to approach to the dignity of downright insanity. Their measures appear to ordinary men to be trains deliberately laid to ensure that the next outburst of native feeling will be universal and uncontrollable, and they are urged at a time when the press is announcing that the private troops of the Nizam have increased in efficiency, and that the Great Mahratta Chief, Scindia, holds annually his own camp of exercise in the heart of our Empire. By this statement we do not mean to hint at any want of present loyalty on the part of these dignitaries. No one however knows what a day may bring forth.

All history and experience prove that the form of Government most suited to and invariably adopted by oriental nations is one of a personal character—whether patriarchal or despotic. It is the personal influence of individual men which has always guided Eastern politics, and when this influence is choked by Departmentalism all faith in the integrity and stability of affairs speedily disappears. An illustration of this clinging to personality is often shown when talking to the relatives of sepoys of the Madras Army. They designate the Regiments by the names only of those who originally raised them, and talk of the DALRYMPLE, the MACKENZIE, and the DAVIS pultuns. They are often ignorant of the numbers which the Regiments have for half a century borne on our Army Lists, while we have forgotten the very names of our countrymen which

are still household words in our Sepoy families. It has been a grave political mistake to lose sight of this ineradicable trait in the temperaments of our subjects, and the politicians of the hour are doing their very worst to intensify and focus the blunder that has already been committed. We do not mean that it is not absolutely necessary for the conduct of affairs that departments should exist. We deprecate their abuse only—as when the working becomes that of an automaton—when the departmental head employs such expressions in issuing decrees against which there is no hope of successful appeal, as "it appears to *this office*" instead of "it appears to *me*,"—and when the folly of the foolish man who may work the instrument is undetected, or when, it may be, the wisdom of the wise man is lost. Under such a system independence of thought becomes a crime to be crushed, and the pliable man without principles, or without brains, is deemed the most deserving public servant.

It was bad enough when we saw the Departments of our Presidency gradually becoming less personal and less tangible; but we have recently seen that an open and strong effort is now being made to "centralise and consolidate" the whole control in Bengal, and it promises to be successful unless vigorous remonstrances are laid before the Home authorities. Our first Department which lost its independence of action was that of Military Finance. Its officials are now nominated and promoted entirely from Bengal. The prospects of any one of them who hesitat-

ed to carry out a behest emanating from Simla or from Calcutta would be black indeed, and they are being skilfully used as instruments for the destruction of other branches of the Madras Service.

If we are to credit the warnings of our press, the Ordnance Department is to be the next victim. For a century it has worked well and efficiently but its very efficiency is now regarded as the head and front of its offending. It is admitted that its personnel in the lower grades has been comparatively more expensive than that in Bengal; but the custody of and accounting for its valuable stores have for many years been entirely trusted to the care of deserving soldiers selected from the Army, while in Bengal a cheaper native agency shared in this work. It is believed however that true economy and large actual saving have resulted from the Madras system. No organised robberies have taken place, and no masses of costly stores which had never been used have been exposed for auction sale. When war arose, expeditions for service either in the interior or beyond the sea were promptly and efficiently supplied, and experienced men were sent in charge of the matériel of war; while in periods of peace watchful care was used that we should never be liable to be taken by surprise. Much useful work also was done by the Department which was by other means not more economically performed in Bengal. It had for instance the custody and repair of tents in all our larger cantonments, and, we are informed that when, a few years ago, the Ben-

gal system of supply and custody of these indispensible articles was proposed to be introduced here, it was shown that the average annual demand for their maintenance in peaceful years in that Presidency exceeded that of Madras twelve times over. The saving of money in this item alone far more than compensated for any slight excess caused by the Department having a larger proportion of subordinate European superintendence. The Bengal proposal, alluded to, has been given to the pub lic in a blue book but the Madras effective reply was "burked."

A part of the proposed Ordnance consolidation scheme is said to be that the Inspector Generals in Madras and Bombay are to be abolished, and that the whole work of inspection from Aden to Thayetmyo and from Peshawar to Calcutta and Trichinopoly, is to be performed by one ubiquitous man, who is at the same time to carry on all the various administrative duties, which involve the saving or squandering of lacs on lacs of rupees, and the practical efficiency of three great armies. The idea that one man can properly perform one-half of such duties even in periods of peace is, to use an expression already quoted, simply "preposterous"—but no one can tell what confusion and loss will arise in war when postal, railway and telegraphic lines are swept away, if such suicidal consolidation is carried out. If we are not much mistaken, even when Bengal was in the full enjoyment of an Inspector-General with

a Deputy and Assistant all to itself, complaints have been heard from Artillery Officers that a perfect Ordnance efficiency had not been there obtained.

Another portion of the scheme is said to be the abolition of the Gunpowder and Gun Carriage Factories at Madras. Both are of old standing and neither have hitherto been deemed to be redundant. The first has been in existence for upwards of a century. There can be no doubt however that one great Factory, if only made large enough, is capable of producing an outturn of powder, sufficient for all India, and it is said that very large sums have for this very purpose been within the last few years expended in thus enlarging the Factory at Ishapore. But the real question is, is it prudent to trust to the continued existence of one or even two Factories in such a vast empire as India? No institution is more liable to instantaneous abolition than a Factory for gunpowder. It is true that vast reserve stores of the article can be barrelled up in Magazines, but it is also true that the stuff is of a combustible and explosive character and that a flash of lightning, a shot from an enemy, an accidental dropping of a barrel, or the intervention of a piece of grit or sand in a wrong place may, in the twinkling of an eye, disperse into thin air your most carefully guarded magazine, the replenishment of which from a distance may be occasionally difficult. Neither is gun powder a pleasant commodity to travel with either on land or water. We think, we recollect of some 400 Austrian soldiers having been killed on a railway by

an explosion in one of their recent Italian campaigns; and we also remember a very destructive accident to a number of powder barges in the Ganges at Benares where besides the crews many people in the houses on the shore were destroyed. Moreover the site of Ishapore is a very doubtful one in which to centralize the manufacture of powder. It is quite defenceless, and for many months in 1857 it lay at the mercy of the mutinous Bengal Sepoys in the Cantonment of Barrackpore which lies between it and Calcutta. For some time there was a second Bengal Factory at Allahabad, but itw as closed by Lord William Bentinck, and, as Colonel Anderson of the Bengal Artillery remarks in his work on Gunpowder, this closing was fortunate "as in the late mutiny and occupation of Allahabad by the mutineers the most serious results would otherwise have followed." We agree with the Colonel.

England, besides the Royal Factory at Waltham Abbey, has practically the command of all the private factories in the country which are constantly competing for Government contracts. Mr. Abel, the War Office Chemist, just before the last war wrote with regard to France—"the gunpowder works are divided into two classes; the one class is devoted to the manufacture of gunpowder for military, naval and other Government service; the other works are, except in time of war, exclusively employed upon the production of blasting, sporting or other powder, which are supplied by

Government to meet the industrial and other requirements of the country. There are seven powder works in France belonging to this class, and four to meet the military, naval and engineer requirements." France had therefore eleven Government works, well scattered over her surface, and she, in this matter, avoided that excessive and impolitic centralization of departments which ruined her in her last contest with decentralizing Prussia. There is no reason why one of the Indian powder Factories should not in peaceful times be employed, as were seven in France, in making sporting and other civil powders—should military powders be overabundant. If there is one article of which a Government monopoly in India would be justifiable and politic it is that of gunpowder. We would not propose to prohibit the present free importation of powder; but we know that our local Factory can successfully compete in quality and in price with British and Foreign importations. The Factory would thus become a self supporting concern and there would be no loss, but rather a gain to Indian tradesmen, as of course the whole of the retail trade with less risk and larger margin would be left in their hands. Our native allies are not neglectful of a powder supply independent of us. Within the last year two accidents, one of which killed eighty people, in Holkar's mills at Indore were chronicled by the Press.

With regard to the Bengal proposal to concentrate the manufacture and repair of Gun Carriages at

Futteghur or Allahabad, ordinary men can only view it as not only "preposterous" but insane. Madras for long has been justly celebrated for its excellence in such work. Its wheels, since the beginning of the century, have been unique in their strength and simplicity. Bengal would not of course use the superior pattern of the "minor Presidency" till compelled to do so by its recent adoption as the universal wheel for the whole of the Royal Artillery. Prussia and other Continental nations however adopted the wheel; and so, it is said, has Mr. Pickford for his great London van establishment. The certain disadvantages and, possible disasters, which would result from the proposed Gun Carriage Factory arrangement, are almost too obvious to be put in print. On the next occasion of our guns being in action, and on the usual proportion of our carriages and tumbrils being smashed, we shall have politely to request our enemies to cease firing, till the injured articles can be sent to Futteghur, and thence returned in a serviceable condition—that is to say, if their repair has met with the necessary sanction of the ubiquitous Inspector-General of all India. We may perhaps be relying too much on the courtesy of our foes because the conveyance so far of heavy articles takes a long time. When an Officer was ordered hence to Futteghur the other day, he enquired from the Railway Traffic Manager within what time he might expect his heavy baggage to reach his destination, and was informed that he would be lucky, if it arrived in three

weeks at the nearest railway station. That station is about eighty miles from the Factory. Futteghur is a name too of ill omen. Some of the most cruel and bloody scenes of the mutiny were there perpetrated. Its Christian inhabitants, man, woman and child, were massacred, and the Factory with all its material, was for a long time in the actual possession of the rebels. A sanguinary page would have been torn out off the sad history of Bengal had the example of Madras been followed, in having in its Gun Carriage Factory an enlisted company of Christian Artisans, sons of old soldiers, who could and would have defended their Factory.

But it is believed that the new "Consolidated Factory" is ultimately to be at Allahabad. We were first informed of the fact by some of its new buildings collapsing, before a hammer was raised within their walls. The site is undoubtedly one of the most important strategical points in all India. The Fort, however, all but fell in the mutiny. Up to its very gates anarchy and murder were triumphant, and it was reported that, at the moment when NEILL and his Madrassees forced their way to it, and restored heart and fighting energy to its wavering garrison of Seiks, the Commissary of Ordnance had carefully laid trains to his powder magazines and stores, so as to ensure the total destruction of the place, and thus prevent his ample munitions of war falling into the enemy's hands.

It is not likely that Allahabad will again be left

without a garrison of our own countrymen, sufficiently ample to defend its Fort. But, how are we adequately to secure the 1,541 miles of single line rails, which at present unite it, except at the Kistnah river break, with Madras? On the folly of trusting too much to railway communication, we will quote the words of a letter forwarded by Lord NORTHBROOK, our present Governor-General, when writing officially from the War Office on 28th March 1870. The letter says,—"it is true that, during the last few years, considerable progress has been made in the construction of railways, and, HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS admits that our strength is increased and our position improved by the facilities of more rapid communication thus afforded; but there is, HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS conceives great danger in estimating these advantages too highly. The question of reliance on our railways is one upon which Lord STRATHNAIRN has remarked very strongly. He said,—'No one will urge that a long line of rail from Calcutta, even if it reached the Sutlej and Peshawur, would be a sufficient and reliable transport for British troops operating in the field. In the first place, the scenes of the most important operations may be at a long distance from the line of railroad: and, in the next place, railroads, as the most obvious of tactics, would be the point of attack of Districts in revolt. I myself witnessed the whole line of electric telegraph from Mhow to Gwalior destroyed by the rebels. The disaffected have gained much experience from the mutinies, and, as said

before, the first effort of insurrection against the British power would be to attack its best ally, the railroads. The destruction of railroads is easy. A few barrels of gunpowder placed here and there on the line would effectually obstruct its communication. When on the subject of railroads, I should further observe that this important element of British power, but unfortunately so easy of destruction, entails another charge for British troops. It is true that it carries troops along its long line, but on the other hand that long and expensive line requires protection, and none would be efficient in the time of trouble but that given by British troops. General Officers in command would not have any more important but difficult duty than to put down rebellion in distant provinces and at the same time preserve intact the line of rail.' " The letter adds—"His Royal Highness does not think these opinions can be refuted. Moreover, as regards Field Artillery, communication by railway requires special appliances and means of transport, without which the railways for such purpose are useless." We are all grateful to His Lordship for urging the adoption of means for cooling Indian railroad carriages; but we have not as yet heard of much attention being paid to the want which he in the last sentence so earnestly points out.

The simple fact is that in a country whose people are either discontented or in revolt, you cannot count on keeping permanently open five miles of railway.

A few minutes work of a patriotic porter could ensure a destruction, as complete as that which recently occurred to the Madras train at the Cheyar bridge, to the longest string of carriages, even were they filled with British soldiers and Ishapore gunpowder. A flood too may at any season sweep away a bridge, or a portion of a line. We only the other day had our communications with Bombay and Calcutta cut off for four days by a rainfall of a very ordinary kind, and are of course liable to much longer interruptions. We have not regarded the expense of sending such awkward parcels as gun carriages and barrels of powder along the lengthened lines, because we think that that very expense is probably the strongest argument in favour of the proposals of our "financiers." We make them welcome to it. Large sums of money will have to be entered on the military budgets for practical transfer into the railway treasuries and thus the guaranteed interest may partly be met. The same ingenious argument was used in favour of bringing rocks some 50 or 60 miles from inland for the purpose of forming the breakwater at Madras.

Until the existing financial mania became all powerful, it was not deemed politic that large numbers of deserving soldiers and mechanics should be suddenly thrown out of employment and with their families into starvation; and it was thought prudent that for our own sakes we should keep some hold on the affections of our subjects. We ourselves are becoming

gradually steeled in carrying out, under so called financial orders, measures of a contrary character; but our friends among the natives are sadly puzzled by the apparent change in our mode of treating them. Although we are quite aware that all ideas of the policy of humanity have now been officially abolished, we would still venture to say a few words in favour of the Corps, or Company of Carnatic Ordnance Artificers, whose abolition appears to be involved with that of the Factory in which principally they work. They were first embodied in 1821 by the statesman-soldier, Sir THOMAS MUNRO, who, with other Commanders, had in the Mahratta wars found it impossible to secure the services of a sufficient number of competent Artificers to accompany our Forces in the field. Much inconvenience had been felt from natives, who were employed as mechanics, constantly deserting. To provide for what actual experience had shown to be a necessity of the service, a corps of 156 East Indian Ordnance Artificers was raised. It had also a pupil establishment attached to it, where lads were well educated and usefully worked at the same time. Until the recent rise of Engineering schools and of the cramming and "testing" system in civil institutions, the services of men so educated were eagerly sought for in the survey and other branches of the public service, and even now they are occasionally demanded. Their head quarters are at the Factory, but detachments are scattered among the out-station arsenals, as yet under the control of the Madras

Government. They are enlisted as European Soldiers and are amenable to Martial Law. They form just the very class now so much wanted as artificers to repair the rifles with which sepoy regiments are being armed, and are among the best soldiers of our Madras Volunteer Guards. Lord Strathnairn has testified that disaffected natives learnt much in war by the mutiny. Except however at Delhi, Cawnpore and Lucknow, the Forces opposed to us were easily defeated with little or no damage to our Artillery, and the certainty of similar immunity from damage not being probable in the next outbreak, if it is supported by European power, is lost sight of. But even in 1857-58, Bengal Artificers had sometimes to be tied to artillery wagons to prevent their desertion; and difficulty, only last year, was experienced in obtaining a very limited number of this class to accompany the petty Looshai Expedition. No tax-payer, unless he is also a "financier" would grudge paying an extra sum to secure the skilled services of a body of men, who by their lineage, religion and instincts must stick loyally to us in periods of trouble.

Before quitting the subject we will touch on a matter of perhaps minor importance. The amalgamation of the three Indian Artilleries with the Royal into one huge unweildy and departmental Regiment has not been a successful experiment and the prospects of the Indian Officers have been to a great degree blighted. It is now proposed to reduce

the value of their few remaining prizes by another 25 per cent. They will soon be distributed on the principle of a Dutch auction or on the contract system to the lowest bidder. But every one acquainted with the East knows how difficult it is for a needy man to command the respect of natives, and what a large influence for good a little show and liberality give. The writer of this may be of exceptional ideas, but he certainly thinks it an unwise and in the end uneconomical scheme, which would deprive the military heads of society of the means of living on terms of equality with comparatively boyish civilians and merchants.

The organs of the infatuated men, who in their blindness are doing their utmost to deprive Her Most Gracious Majesty of the brightest jewel in her Imperial Crown and to take from the British manufacturer and merchant one of his largest markets, warn us that other changes are close at hand which are to "astonish us." We surely have already had cause for such a feeling. The Madras Army, which has been unjustly, ungenerously but persistently, maligned, is, we are told, to be still further reduced and ruined. The barrier of its men between Seik-guarded Bengal and the Nizam's country is to be removed, so as to enable future rebellion to be as wide-spreading and as destructive as possible. Our means of making any lengthened resistance are to be "consolidated" 1600 miles off in Bengal. Our very position and influence, as a Presidency, is to be swept away. We are to